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Migration from farms can be stopped. Farm life can be improved through decent housing; through health, education, and public services; and through a combination of part-time employment with part-time agriculture. Rural employment can be provided by enterprises developing recreational resources and soil and water resources.

Assistance programs are available from the Federal government and from state and local governments. Through the mobilization of such services as the Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the Soil Conservation Service, unified programs for the wise use of public and private land have been worked out. The United States Department of Agriculture can enter into agreements with farmers and ranchers to carry out long-range conservation plans, to assist state and local agencies to carry out land use plans through Federal loans, to share in the cost of land purchases, to assist in the financing of reservoirs for municipal or industrial uses, and to assist individual farmers to develop outdoor recreation facilities.

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I am happy to be in the mile-high city of Denver.

Crossing the Plains with the speed of a modern airliner, I remembered with pride the courageous men and women who only a few short generations ago came in covered wagons, on horseback, and on foot to carve out new homes and new farms and ranches on the Plains and in the Mountains. And how many others braved the dangers of mountain passes and deserts to push the frontier westward to the Pacific. I remembered, too, how countless people through the years have struggled and won against the drought and dust of the Plains -- through lean years and good years.

Political philosophers, poets, and historians have rightly sung the praises of rural America. They have told us of the basic qualities that made our land great -- the initiative, the independence, the dedication to the ideals of democracy, the pioneering courage that overcame tremendous obstacles, and the vision to aspire to a future of limitless possibilities. They told us how these qualities grew, flourished, and bore fruit on farms and ranches and in small towns as America grew.

This rural America now faces a period of serious crisis -- a crisis brought about by the same technological and scientific progress that made American agriculture the productive miracle of the world.

But let me make it perfectly clear that the real threat to rural America does not lie in scientific and technical progress itself. The real threat lies in the failure to direct the changes growing out of that progress to meet the real needs and wants of all the people of this nation. And the health of the entire nation, not merely that of the countryside, will be seriously threatened if we fail to preserve and advance the real values of the past as we adopt and make use of the potential for the future.

This threat is very real, and very serious. Its reality is illustrated by the cold facts of what has happened to rural America in our generation. I will point out some of these facts a little later. Its seriousness is demonstrated when an organization as distinguished as the Committee for Economic Development proposes to solve the farm problem by cruelly depressing farm income to the point where a mortal blow would be inflicted upon the small cities, towns, villages and farms that, together, make up rural America.

The C.E.D. would thus attempt to solve a problem of surplus grain by substituting for it an infinitely more serious problem of surplus human beings!

We are unalterably opposed to this approach.

ADAMS STATE COLLEGE LIBRARY

Address by Secretary of Agriculture Orville L. Freeman keynoting Land and People Conference, Hilton Hotel, Denver, Colorado, October 8, 1962, 9:45 a.m. (MST).

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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION AND WELFARE
Office of Education

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Instead of the C.E.D. program of deliberately using poverty to drive people off the farms, we seek to end rural poverty by building new resources in the country.

Instead of the C.E.D. program to idle our great land resources because they now produce more food than we can use, we seek to redirect those resources to meet critical and growing scarcities that exist in our society.

Instead of using rural America as a base from which to inflict upon our burgeoning metropolitan areas an influx of job-seekers, we strive to develop in rural America facilities for outdoor recreation that will offer to the men, women and children of our cities opportunities to fulfil one of this Nation's most pressing and urgent demands.

These are some of our goals for rural America. In order to approach this task within a framework of understanding that will enable us to choose the best programs directed toward these goals, I am asking you to review with me: First, the size and shape of rural America; second, some of the facts today that clearly warn us of the imminent threat to our rural economy; and third, some of the programs we are developing to avert this threat by expanding opportunity and encouraging new growth.

Let's take a look at rural America today.

Two out of every five Americans today live in areas that are essentially rural in their nature. Almost 16 million live on farms. Thirty-eight million others, who are not farmers, live close to the land in strictly rural areas. In towns and non-metropolitan cities of less than 25,000 population there are 22 million more people who, because they draw their economic life-blood from the countryside, are also a part of rural America.

They total up to 76 million people who are most directly concerned with the danger signals that threaten rural America, although all Americans are indirectly involved. To understand their implications, let's look for a moment at some of the results that technological and scientific changes have brought about, along with the new problems arising because of the failure to adjust to these changes.

In the first place, it is important to recognize to what extent our growth in population reflects increasing urbanization. From 1950 to 1960, some 300 metropolitan counties accounted for 85 percent of the population increase. And 50 of these metropolitan counties had half of the Nation's total population growth.

Outside urbanized areas, the population of most towns under 2,500 declined, while that of most towns from 2,500 to 10,000 people increased slightly. But their supporting farm population dropped by one-third -- from 23.1 million to 15.6 million. On the average, at least a million people left the farm every year through the 1950's.

The decline in farm population reflects the economic plight of the farmer. The efficient family farmer found it necessary to increase his acreage enough for full use of the machine-based technologies. He bought or rented land from the small farmer who lacked the resources or the skills to use the new technology.

Many small farmers gave up, or turned to whatever nonfarm work they could find in order to remain in rural America. In 1959, families on the 2.9 million farms producing less than $10,000 in gross marketings got 73 percent of their cash income from nonfarm sources.

Even with many fewer people to divide farm earnings, per capita personal income of the farm population was $1,373 last year, or only 59 percent of the $2,345 for the nonfarm population.

And this was true despite the fact that total realized net farm income was 10 percent higher in 1961 than in 1960, and the highest in eight years.

With its major economic mainstay in trouble, rural America began to slide backwards. And today we see these results:

More than half of the poverty in America today is in rural America.

Rural people lack educational opportunities. Half of our urban people 25 years of age and older have had more than 11 years of formal education. By comparison, the median figure for the rural nonfarm population is 9.5 years of formal schooling, and for farm people it is 8.8 years.

Rural people lack job opportunities. Underemployment in the rural areas is so great that it is the equivalent of around four million unemployed.

This has happened in a countryside which has produced an abundance of food and fiber never before seen in the world -- where one farm worker feeds and clothes 27 people.

This has happened in the United States of America -- the richest, most vigorous and dynamic society in the world.

The sound and fury over the management and use of agricultural abundance has too often obscured the plight of people and the plight of rural communities. Concern has centered on commodities -- instead of communities.

But we are here today because our concern -- yours and mine -- is for people and their communities.

Change, inexorable though it is, can be shaped to work for people -- not against them. This means a two-pronged attack on the problems of agriculture. We must manage our abundant productivity in order that the really efficient family farm can produce a decent income; and, second, for those now living on farms that cannot be

operated efficiently, we must offer opportunities to raise their levels of living by means of both agricultural and non-agricultural pursuits, or some combination of the two, as far as practicable in their own communities where they prefer to live.

It is utterly inconceivable to me to think that in the American society there is a lack of resources, a lack of ingenuity, or a shortage of determination to revitalize rural America.

What basic resources do we have with which to strengthen rural America?

First, we have tremendous human resources. You and thousands of others are serving in hundreds of local, State, and regional planning and action institutions or committees -- both public and private.

Second, we have abundant natural resources in our land, water, forests, and wildlife. Nearly three-fourths of all land in the 48 contiguous States is in private ownership. Here is the source of our abundance of food and fiber, and 69 percent of our commercial forests. Privately owned land, together with the National Forests and other public land, is the great gathering place and reservoir of most of the fresh water for farm, city, industry, fish and wildlife, and recreation.

Eighty percent of the game taken by hunting is produced on privately-owned land. Eighty-five percent of the wildlife habitat economically feasible of improvement is privately-owned.

Here, near the crowded cities, is space for outdoor recreation, and the water, fish, game, wild creatures, and woodlands to make outdoor recreation truly meaningful to urban people who desperately need it.

Third, we have programs to enable people to conserve, use, and develop the land and water resources -- a whole galaxy of action programs authorized by the Congress, by the States, and by local government. In an all-out effort to improve and strengthen these programs, the USDA is emphasizing rural areas development.

Rural areas development is a blending of all available programs for a broad-gauge, long-range simultaneous attack on all the problems of rural America.

Credit problems are not being attacked separately from those of conservation.

Conservation is not being sought separately from the efforts to bring production into balance with consumption and increase farm income through fair prices for farm products.

Industrial development is not being sought separately from solution of the problems of adequate training and education, water supply, sewage disposal, electrification, hospitals, libraries, and other necessary public facilities.

Help for the development of outdoor recreation on the farm and in the forest takes into account the need for credit and technical assistance, and the needs of both rural and urban people.

The time is past when each program goes down a separate path. The time is here when local people can use as one the tools of credit, research, technical aid, electrification, educational services, marketing, and assistance in cooperative efforts.

The time is past when land can be idled. Instead, land can be put to paying use for the production of grass, trees, and outdoor recreation to meet the needs of all Americans.

The time is past when America can afford a single use for any acre if that acre can be put to multiple-use, just as the National Forests are producing timber, water supply, forage, wildlife and recreation -- all at the same time.

And the time is past when it's even valid to ask, "Can rural America be revitalized?

Rural America is being revitalized now.

It is happening where local people take the initiative, as they did in the Projoaque (po-wa-kee) - Santa Cruz Soil and Water Conservation District in northern New Mexico.

This district had about all the land and water problems there are -- erosion, flood, sediment, and drought.

Except for narrow strips of irrigated land along the streams, the area is steep and cut by deep washes. The dry foothill range lands had been heavily grazed by sheep, cattle, and horses. Flash floods from the hills into the narrow valleys damaged irrigation systems.

The problem was compounded by the fact that seven-eighths of the land is publicly owned or managed. A single farmer or rancher often was a user, by lease or permit, of lands administered by as many as three different public agencies, in addition to a lease on private land.

In 1951 the district supervisors mobilized the services of the Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the National Park Service, the Soil Conservation Service, the State Land Commission, and the State Department of Game and Fish

Together they worked out a unified program for the wise use of public and private land. They decided to tackle their problems the way nature had packaged them -- on a small watershed basis.

As needed, conservation cost-sharing help came from USDA's Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service. They had credit aid from the Farmers Home Administration. These programs meshed with technical help from the Soil Conservation Service, the range and watershed management work of the Forest Service on the Santa Fe National Forest, and the improvement of other public lands by the Department of Interior and the State of New Mexico.

The district supervisors got additional help when they sponsored the Santa Cruz Small Watershed Projects. Dams to retard flood water or to stop the flow of sediment are being built where they are needed -- some on public land and others on private land. The range lands are better managed and better protected -- producing much more forage for livestock and wildlife. An area of spectacular gullies -- a veritable badlands type of erosion -- is being healed by grass as a result of the management program.

All this -- and much more -- began when local people took the initiative to combine public and private resources to solve mutual problems.

And the unified program is gaining speed. A new watershed project, in the Pojoaque (po-wa-kee) Valley, is being planned with USDA help.

The people of Santa Fe, just south of the district, are supporting the program, too. Less than a month ago, The New Mexican published in Santa Fe said editorially: "Last year the property owners . . . in the Santa Cruz valley protected themselves from a substantial amount of flash flood and erosion damage . . . This year, residents of the Pojoaque valley are setting up a similar program. We're 100 percent for them."

And the local people also are looking far into the future. Less than a month ago, the district supervisors completed a new, forward-looking district program. They took into account all the new programs that will aid them with rural areas development. They included outdoor recreational development to help meet one of today's greatest needs of all Americans. This new district program now becomes the basis for continued cooperation of the people of Pojoaque-Santa Cruz district and the Department of Agriculture.

But that isn't all. More and more people in the area are receiving central station electric service through the Jemez (hay-mes) Mountains Electric Cooperative at nearby Espanola. With loans totaling more than eight and a quarter million dollars from USDA's Rural Electrification Administration, the cooperative is serving about eight thousand consumers. Nearly $1,900,000 in principal and interest has been paid back.

Throughout rural America, local people are directly involved in seeking common objectives for their communities and areas.

More than 50,000 rural and small-town people are members of over 1,500 rural areas development committees. They already have prepared 2,700 development project proposals, and have started 900 of them.

There is no better place to see -- and to feel -- the upswing in the countryside than with the family in a new rural home.

Time and time again we have seen fears disappear and confidence reappear as the Department has helped rural families to finance 6,200 new homes since the Housing Act of 1961 was passed. The effect also is electrifying on the community. The building of a new home is proof that someone has confidence in the community's future as a good place to live, to work, and to bring up a family.

And the effect goes far beyond the community. It is like a pebble dropped into a still pond. Rural construction creates jobs and extra buying power for carpenters, electricians, bricklayers, and others. It provides an additional market for building materials and appliances -- a market that helps to buoy the urban economy.

This is extremely important, for we are an interdependent people -- rural, suburban, and urban. Revitalization of the countryside will be speeded by a strong and vigorously growing urban economy with the means to buy the goods and services, including outdoor recreation, produced in rural areas.

And each region is an integral part of the whole.

This regional conference was arranged to give you full opportunity to review with each other, and with us, the problems of the Great Plains States and the resources -- both human and physical or material -- for solving these problems.

I urge each of you to participate in one of the four discussion groups. We are eager to have your answers to the questions to be propounded at these group sessions.

You have an opportunity to be heard on matters of vital concern to rural development and conservation in your region.

We are here to listen, and to learn. We want your suggestions for improving the Department's services for conservation and development.

To make the services of the Department more effective, I have reorganized it to place under one leader -- the Assistant Secretary for Rural Development and Conservation -- The Farmer Cooperative Service, the Farmers Home Administration, the Forest Service, the Office of Rural Areas Development, the Rural Electrification Administration, and the Soil Conservation Service. This is a grouping -- a packaging -- of important development and conservation services to enable the Department to help you more effectively.

In making these and other changes in the Department, I have sought the advice of almost countless rural leaders. I have worked closely with members of Congress.

And I am happy to report to you today that the Congress has provided new and important tools for your use in revitalizing the countryside.

Some of these are in the Food and Agriculture Act of 1962, which President Kennedy signed less than two weeks ago.

Some are in the Senior Citizens Housing Act of 1962, also just approved by the President. USDA's Farmers Home Administration is now authorized to make loans to provide low and moderate cost rental housing and related facilities for elderly persons and families in rural areas.

Other new tools are in the Public Works Acceleration Act which the President signed into law in mid-September. This Act's purpose is the immediate creation of new jobs in financially hard-pressed rural as well as urban areas.

The Department of Agriculture has a massive backlog of work projects ready to provide new jobs and economic upswing in rural areas eligible for help under the Accelerated Public Works Program, in virtually every State.

Some of the projects ready for operation are Federal. These are in the National Forests, in Soil Conservation Districts, or for the Agricultural Research Service.

Some are cooperative projects with State and local governmental subdivisions. Local cost-sharing or matching of Federal funds is required for these projects. Scores of multi-purpose dams in Small Watershed projects sponsored by local agencies in cooperation with the Soil Conservation Service could be included. So could State-Forest Service cooperative projects, including protection of forested areas from fire, insects, and diseases.

USDA is working closely with the Department of Commerce, which administers the Accelerated Public Works Program, in getting rural projects started immediately. USDA already was working with the Department of Commerce in carrying out the Area Redevelopment Act in eligible rural areas.

The Food and Agriculture Act of 1962 gives the Department authority to aid rural people in new long-range programs for putting the land we don't need for crops into new and profitable uses, including a great expansion of outdoor recreation for all Americans.

Permit me to briefly describe some of these new authorities.

USDA now can enter into agreements up to 10 years with farmers and ranchers to carry out long-range conservation plans. These agreements will provide for cost-sharing and other help for changes in cropping systems and land use, and for development of soil, forest, wildlife and recreation resources. This includes land on which conservation reserve contracts are expiring.

The Department has authority to assist State and local public agencies designated by the Governor or the State Legislature to carry out land use plans. Federal loans, repayable within 30 years, can be made to the designated State and local agencies.

In Small Watershed Projects, the Department now may share with agencies of the State up to one-half of the cost of land, easements, and rights-of-way for reservoir or other areas to be managed by State and local agencies for public recreation. Cost-sharing also may be made available for providing sanitary and other facilities needed for recreation. State fish, wildlife, and park agencies are eligible for help. So are counties, municipalities and special purpose districts created by or under provisions of State legislation.

The Department may now advance funds to local organizations for immediate purchase of lands, easements, and rights-of-way to prevent encroachment of other developments in Small Watershed Projects. These funds would have to be repaid with interest before construction is started.

The Department now may aid local organizations in developing water supply for future use in Small Watershed Projects. USDA can pay up to 30 percent of the total cost of a reservoir to store water for future municipal or industrial use. Repayment and interest charges may be deferred up to 10 years if the water stored for future use is not used during that period. Repayment with interest will begin as soon as the water is first used.

All these and other watershed act amendments are applicable to the 11 watersheds, such as the Washita River Flood Prevention Project in Oklahoma, authorized under the Flood Control Act of 1944.

For the first time, the Department through the Farmers Home Administration can make loans to individual farmers for development of outdoor recreation. The owner-operator of a family-size farm may borrow up to $60,000 for construction of fish ponds, development of hunting preserves, construction of cabins, picnic and camping areas, and other facilities for outdoor recreation. The borrower may have up to 40 years to repay the loan at five percent interest.

Operating loans up to $35,000 also are available to owner-operators and to farm tenants for operation of recreational facilities. These loans are repayable in seven years at five per-cent interest.

FHA also may make loans up to $1 million dollars to aid associations serving farmers and other rural families to make changes in land use, including the development of recreational facilities.

With these new tools, the Department can assist you and your local agencies in planning and carrying out Rural Renewal Projects, Resource Conservation and Development Projects, Watershed Recreation Developments, creation of water supply for future needs, projects for expanding grasslands and family forests, and for the development of outdoor recreation facilities on farm land.

The Department looks to local people to initiate, to plan, and to carry out these projects in cooperation with local and State agencies, just as it does in its long-established conservation and development programs for other privately owned land.

The ultimate success of rural areas development is -- and must be -- the responsibility of local people. The impetus and the drive must come from them.

The Federal Government can provide incentives and technical services, but government cannot and should not do the job for local people. Government cannot and should not control all the land-use activities of its citizens. The government has programs and resources that will help them. But any community -- any area -- that waits for government to pull it out of the problems caused by change and shifting economic and social patterns will be submerged.

The challenge, then, is to the leadership of the people of this great countryside of ours. Countless thousands of people, living up to the tradition born in rural America of local effort to meet local problems, have already accepted the challenge. They have sound experience and notable achievements to back them in this effort. Local leadership has demonstrated its worth in farmer committees, electric and other cooperatives, in soil and water conservation districts, in rural areas development committees, as well as in scores of organizations in our towns and villages. A united and coordinated effort of all these forces will insure the future of rural America.

I should like to conclude by pointing out that our program for strengthening rural America is an integral part of our program for Food and Agriculture in the 1960's. The heated debate over controversial supply management features of the Food and Agriculture Act of 1962 obscured the great advances authorized in the Act for conservation and development -- advances that drew quiet but strong support from conservation leaders in all fields and at all levels, rural and urban. But the goal of strengthening the income of the family farm, by means of adjusting production to amounts that can be used, is inseparable from the goal of strengthening rural America.

We seek increased efficiency on our farms, and we would further this goal by helping farmers to acquire and operate more efficient farming units; but along with this we seek farm programs that will enable the farmer, as well as the consumer, to benefit from this increased efficiency.

We seek, therefore, to manage our abundant productivity, not by idling land, but by putting it to use to provide services such as recreation that are in increasingly scarce supply.

We repudiate the C.E.D. proposals to use poverty as a weapon to accelerate the migration from our farms, and to replace a surplus of wheat and corn with a surplus of men and women.

Instead, we can provide, in rural America:

--a land of prosperous farms and thriving towns, where people may choose to earn a living, not only by producing food and fiber, but also from among a number of attractive alternatives that result from building new enterprises and creating new opportunities;

-- opportunities for combing part-time employment with part-time agriculture to help to provide a good life for those many Americans who prefer to live in non-metropolitan areas;

-- decent housing and adequate living for the millions of senior citizens who live in greater proportions in our rural areas than in our cities;

-- communities that can provide health, education, and other public services equal to the best that we know how to provide;

-- resources of outdoor recreation of all kinds and in sufficient supply to meet the needs of our growing urban population;

-- the conservation of our soil and water resources to meet the needs of future generations.

This kind of rural America will add to the economic strength of the Nation, and will continue to make invaluable spiritual and social contributions to our national life. We can have this kind of rural America if we work together to preserve the real values of our heritage as we use the new science and technology to meet changing human needs.

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